

# Contribution of Musser Family Recognized at St. Ignace Building Dedication

By Karen Gould

More than 50 people attended the dedication of the Marley Brown Musser Resource Center on Ferry Lane Saturday, May 3. The building houses the Hope Chest Resale Shop and the faith-based St. Ignace Area Hope, founded by area churches to provide emergency assistance to families in need.

"There's clearly God's hand at work here," said Mrs. Brown Musser following the hour-long building dedication that included speeches, prayers, and music.

The building, which was appraised at \$460,000, said Pastor Jim Balfour of St. Ignace United Methodist Church during the ceremony, was sold to Area Hope by the Musser family of Mackinac Island for \$50,000.

"That generosity continues to form this ministry," he said, also recognizing First National Bank of St. Ignace and attorney Prentiss "Moie" Brown of St. Ignace. The bank provided the organization with a loan that required no down payment to both purchase and remodel the building. Mr. Brown,

At right: Celebrating the dedication of the Marley Brown Musser Resource Center Saturday, May 3, are (front row, from left) Volunteer Coordinator Connie Litzner of Area Hope, Pastor Tari Stage-Harvey of Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church and her son, Elijah, Marley Brown Musser; (back from St. Ignatius Loyola Catholic Church, Deacon Tom McClelland and Father Al Mott, Pastor Jerry Wittmus of Bethel Lutheran Church in Cedarville, Pastor Dan Williams of the Assembly of God Church, R. Daniel Musser Jr., Pastor Jim Balfour of St. Ignace United Methodist Church, Pastor Tom Penner of Straits Evangelical Free Church, and Pastor Mike Lane of Glen Memorial Baptist Church.



said Pastor Balfour, volunteered legal services and advice. Other community businesses and resi-

dents, he pointed out, have contributed to the project.

More than 50 volunteers also

were recognized during the Saturday dedication.

The resource center, say church

leaders, will continue to provide a connection between the needs of residents and available resources.

The building also houses the St. Ignace Food Pantry.

"I can't think of anything nicer than to have my name associated with such a great project. I keep choking up," said Mrs. Brown Musser after the dedication. "What we did pales in comparison to what so many people in the community have done. That's why I'm a little shy about having my name on it."

Area Hope is looking for more volunteers and the Food Pantry is in need of canned goods.

Area Hope provides a 24-hour assistance hotline for those in need, 643-6780.

The Hope Chest resale store is open for donations and sales Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., Thursdays from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m., and Saturdays from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. The Food Pantry, which also seeks donations, is open Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m.

Those interested in making a tax-deductible financial donation can send it to St. Ignace Area Hope, P.O. Box 170, St. Ignace Michigan 49781.

## Township Rejects Fire Contract With Mackinaw City

By Paul Gingras

Mackinaw Township, at the tip of the Lower Peninsula, has rejected a fire service contract proposed by the village of Mackinaw City, and offered an alternative contract that reduces the amount of its payment by about \$10,000. The move continues a dispute between the village and the township regarding payment for fire services, which has lasted more than two years.

Mackinaw Township's alternative contract proposal was received by the village council at its Thursday, May 1, meeting. Village Manager Jeff Lawson called for council direction on the matter and, lacking time to review the alternative proposal before the meeting, the council agreed to wait before taking action. Belinda Mollen, chair of the village safety committee, will meet with Mr. Lawson and legal counsel to discuss the situation.

Barry Dean, supervisor of the Mackinaw Township Board of Trustees, said the village contract was unfair and did not take into account his municipality's financial limits. Anticipated legal expenses facing the township this year

weighed heavily on the board's decision, he said.

"My board had no intention of signing [Mackinaw City's] contract," he told *The St. Ignace News*.

Portions of both Mackinaw and Wawatam townships lie within village limits. The village has provided fire service to the portions inside and outside its borders for decades, but it has lacked an appropriate method for charging for services, Mr. Lawson said.

The department has relied on a haphazard system since the 1980s in which Wawatam collected money through a fire millage. Mackinaw Township matched it and Mackinaw City covered the majority of fire department costs.

The three-year village contract is based on a weighted formula that calculates charges for the village and each township based on each municipality's population, property value, and number of fire runs each year.

"You are going to have different costs based on those factors," Mr. Lawson said, noting that the population and overall property value of Mackinaw Township is larger than

Wawatam, and the village fire department averages more fire runs there.

"Just because it is a weighted formula, does not mean it is the right thing to do," Mr. Dean said.

Mackinaw Township's proposal calls for a one-year contract based on how much the township board projects the municipality can afford.

Under Mackinaw City's plan, fire costs for Wawatam Township would remain about the same. Costs for Mackinaw Township would double, roughly, compared to the amount the township has paid in the past, Mr. Lawson said.

To help create an equitable payment system, the three entities sought help from Dr. Lynn Harvey, a retired Michigan State University professor knowledgeable in such municipal agreements, especially fire agreements. Mackinaw City's proposed contract was based on Dr. Harvey's ideas, Mr. Lawson said.

Plugging village fire department expenses for 2007/2008 into Dr. Harvey's formula, the village esti-

mated each entity would pay approximately the following: The village of Mackinaw City, \$96,000; Mackinaw Township, \$30,000; Wawatam, \$15,000.

Wawatam Township signed the three-party contract last month.

"It think it is a good contract, a clear contract, and it gives us something to work with in the future," said Wawatam Township Supervisor Roger Moore.

Mackinaw Township's alternative contract removes Dr. Harvey's three-party formula and offers the village a lump sum of \$20,000 for one year of fire service.

Both townships weighed the pros and cons of contracting with other municipalities, such as the Carp Lake Township Fire Department and the City of St. Ignace Fire Department.

"My biggest concern is that [the formula] was fair for everyone," Mr. Dean said.

Providing fire service is something the township must do, howev-

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## Roney Charged With Violating Rules in Animal Neglect Case

A 92nd District Court hearing was scheduled at 11 a.m. Tuesday, May 6, for Larry Roney of Rexton, who allegedly violated his probation after pleading no contest to animal neglect charges in February. He was arraigned on the probation charges April 18.

Mr. Roney, 69, is being charged with not having his animals inspected by a veterinarian monthly and for having one too many animals on his property. Both are stipulations he agreed to in his probation hearing February 26.

Mr. Roney was allowed to keep 29 animals, and has allegedly picked up another horse,

Mackinac County Prosecuting Attorney Fred Feleppa said.

In January, 10 horses, six goats, five llamas, four donkeys, two chickens, and two pigs were forfeited to Mackinac County Animal Control, which seized most of the animals at Mr. Roney's farm after Animal Control Officer Wendy Frosland obtained a warrant based on poor living conditions for the animals.

Mr. Roney is on probation for a year, during which time he must provide a sanitary living environment for the animals, maintain their vaccinations and licenses, and allow health examinations each month at his own expense.

## Hamel To Chair City Zoning Board Soblaskey Granted Garage Variance on Medora

Jamin Soblaskey has been granted a variance for a garage on his corner lot on Medora and Hamlin streets by the St. Ignace Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA). The board granted the variance based on the large 100-foot right-of-way. The city's standard right-of-way is 66 feet. During the Monday, May 5 meeting, the board also rescinded a variance it approved last August for a fence, because the owner has moved from the area. During its first meeting in six months, the board also elected Tom Hamel as chair and Fred Strich as vice-chair.

Mr. Soblaskey, who attended the meeting, sought the variance to construct an attached garage to his home as he plans to convert his existing garage into living space. The garage, which would be placed on an angle from the house, would have a side setback of 16.5 feet, said building inspector Paul Sved, and would not meet the city setback requirement for corner lots, which is 20 feet. With a back yard setback of 21 feet, the

structure also would fall short of a zoning requirement for 25 feet.

Mr. Sved advised the board that Hamlin Street has the widest right-of-way on any street in the city at 100 feet. Even with the new 24-foot-wide by 28-foot-deep garage, said Mr. Sved, the structure would be more than 48 feet from the edge to the blacktop.

Lacking any documents to explain the unusually wide right-of-way, the board surmised it might have had something to do with old railroad tracks in the area.

In August, the board had granted a variance for a six-foot-high fence to Gia Lopez for her Truckey Street home. The city limits fences to four-feet in height.

Mrs. Lopez requested the safety fence for her autistic daughter. During Monday's meeting, the ZBA noted that Mrs. Lopez had moved from the area. The board decided to rescind the variance, which would prevent it from being transferred to the next property owner.



## Women's Expo Draws 27 Exhibitors

During the Women's Expo Saturday, May 3, Sandy Snyder (right) of St. Ignace registered for the 75-mile, three-day fundraising walk sponsored by Gracie's Heart. The exhibit was one of 27 booths at the expo at the St. Ignace Middle School. Gracie's Heart co-founders Cate Hough (left) and Wendy Frush of Rudyard say the event will raise funds for pediatric equipment for Mackinac Straits Hospital, War Memorial Hospital, and Cheboygan Memorial Hospital. Gracie's Heart was established in memory of Gracie Pearl, Mrs. Hough's daughter, who died at two months of age from a heart condition. The organization's goals are to bring awareness to pediatric conditions and to support area families. The walk is planned to begin August 30. To register for the walk or for more information, call (906) 635-1812.

## Postal Food Drive Set for Saturday

U.S. Post Office letter carriers will gather food donations for the needy Saturday, May 10, in "Stamp Out Hunger," a program of the National Association of Letter Carriers.

To help, families can leave a sturdy bag containing non-perishable food, such as canned soup, vegetables, pasta, rice, or cereal next to the mailbox before the

time of regular mail delivery. Food items should be in non-breakable containers, such as boxes and cans. Local letter carriers will deliver them to regional food banks which distribute food to local pantries, shelters, and soup kitchens throughout the state.

Food can also be dropped off at the St. Ignace Post Office.

## City Gives \$5,000 To Museum Start-up

Michilimackinac Historical Society will receive \$5,000 for start-up operations at Fort de Buade Museum from last year's \$118,000 grant from the Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians. The museum is scheduled to open Memorial Day weekend.

By the time the museum opens, the Historical Society, which operates it, will have \$8,208.54 on hand for operations, including the \$5,000. To allow for the start-up, city attorney Prentiss Brown, Jr. will wait until the next annual tribal payment in May for his legal fees. He charged \$8,800 to handle the purchase of the museum property last year.

## Children Plant Trees at Historic Village



In celebration of Arbor Day, third grade students from Mackinaw City Elementary School pose with Village Manager Jeff Lawson while planting trees at Mackinaw Historic Village Friday, May 2. Pictured (from left) are Whitney Taylor, Savannah Grimmer, Mr. Lawson, and Alaina Martin. Arbor Day is April 22. Owing to cool northern weather, Mackinaw City celebrates later, in hopes of a warmer day for tree planting. Mr. Lawson discussed the origin of Arbor Day at the site's one-room schoolhouse before planting trees. The annual project is part of village efforts to remain an official tree city, which means Mackinaw City plants and cares for trees on city property. To participate in the program, the village works with the National Arbor Day Foundation and has a tree board composed of village council members and civic-minded members of the community.

## Gibson, North To Run for Judgeship

Beth Ann Gibson and Thomas North have filed to run for the position of judge of 92nd District Court, serving Mackinac and Luce counties, in the November 4 election.

One candidate will be elected to the nonpartisan six-year term. The deadline for candidates to file for the race was April 29.

The incumbent, Judge Gibson of Newberry, has served the court since 2005 and has also served by assignment the 91st District Court, the 11th Circuit Court, and the 6th Probate Court during her term. She sits on the Upper Peninsula Substance Abuse Advisory Council and served on the Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians Judicial

Selection Committee in 2007.

Judge Thomas B. North of St. Ignace presided over 6th Probate Court from 1992 to 2006, serving Mackinac and Luce counties, and at times served as an assigned judge in 92nd District Court during that term. He has served on numerous state and local task forces, commissions, and organizations and was part of the Lieutenant Governor's Children's Commission, the recommendations of which led to a strengthening of Michigan's child protection laws. He has been a member of the Michigan Probate Judges Association, National College of Probate Judges, and Children's Charter Board of Directors.

## City Marina Reports High July Booking

The St. Ignace Marina already is booked almost every night in July, Marina Director Gene Elmer told the city council Monday, April 21.

"This will be the busiest July we've had since we've opened the new marina," he said.

The Chicago Yacht Club will be using 101 slips during the

100th sailing of the Chicago to Mackinac race, he reported, and the Bay Harbor Yacht Club has booked 40 slips during the St. Ignace Fish Feast. The month will end with a trip to the area from the Grosse Pointe Yacht Club. Club members have just begun to register, and the smallest boat so far is 61 feet long.